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The Missionary Academia

THE MISSIONS IN CHINA

THE PAST

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He left Germany for the China Missions but war conditions prevented his going to China and he came to America where he is now completing his post-graduate studies. Since 1940 he has been a student of Sinology at Columbia University, New York City. He has already obtained his Master's Degree and is presently preparing for his Doctorate in that field. He plans to go to China for mission work after the war.

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The study outline has been formulated by the Rev. Peter L. Blake, M. A., a priest of the Archdiocese of New York, and a member of the faculty of the School of Education, Fordham University, New York City.

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The authors of the various studies of the Missionary Academia express their own views which are necessarily independent of the National Council of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

THE MISSIONS IN CHINA,— THE PAST

Rev. Bernward H. Willeke, O.F.M.

I. The Religious Background of the Chinese

During a period of more than 3500 years the Chinese have developed an admirably great and rich culture. They built up an empire which functioned for two milleniums, and some of their emperors were equal to the mightiest rulers of the world. They created an extensive and beautiful literature. Their social and ethical philosophy is praiseworthy and inspiring. They have produced great artists in many fields. Even their religions are imposing and have been a source of inspiration for many generations. ([1])

But, viewed in the light of the Gospel, China has been sitting in darkness all these centuries. ([2]) Its cultural achievements, great as they are, have been built up by forces alien, or even hostile, to the spirit of Christ. Frequently the work of the *anima naturaliter christiana* becomes apparent with its longing for complete understanding, goodness and beauty. But, on the whole, the structure of the old Chinese culture is pagan—without the blessing of Faith and Grace.

Many strata of philosophy, religious belief and practices often

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[1] For a description of Chinese culture see: Fitzgerald, C.P., *China—A Short Cultural History*. London, 1935; Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *The Chinese Their History and Culture*. Two Volumes in One. Last reprint 1938.

[2] Cf. Hsü Kuang-ch'i (died 1632) in a letter to a friend. Hu Shih, *The Chinese Renaissance*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago, Illinois. 1934. p. 30.

going back to remote antiquity have contributed to the religion of China. (3)

A. Animism and Ancestor Worship

Primitive animism can be traced back to the earliest times. The ancient books see the whole world peopled with deities, spirits of mountains and rivers, homes and fields, animals and trees. This animism may be regarded as the dominant feature of Chinese religion throughout the centuries. (4) Of similar antiquity, and closely connected with animism, is the worship of ancestors which is the strong foundation of the Chinese family system. (5) There was also the worship of the "good Earth", and especially of Heaven *(T'ien)* —a superior intelligent and ethical power (6) from which the emperor, the "Son of Heaven" received his mandate. (7) Perhaps a remnant of an earlier monotheism, *T'ien* was after 1200 A.D. not more than an impersonal principle in the pantheistic system of the orthodox Confucian philosophy. (8)

B. Confucianism and Taoism

Of the numerous philosophical schools of the Later Chou period (722-255 B.C.) only Confucianism and Taoism became religious cults. Confucius (551-479 B.C.) himself was an ethical reformer at small feudal courts, but his teachings mixed with beliefs of popular cults became in the Han period (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) the official statecult (9) which was closely connected with the organization of the young empire, and which, except for later developments, remained intact until the Chinese revolution of 1911. Taoism, supposedly founded by Lao-tzu, was originally a sort of

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[3] On Chinese religion we have the monumental work of Henry Dorée, S.J. *Researches into Chinese Superstitions.* Translated from the French with historical and explanatory notes by M. Kennelly, S.J. 13 Vols. Illustrated. Shanghai, T'usewei Press. 1914-1938.

[4] de Groot, J.J.M., *The Religion of the Chinese.* New York, 1912. p. 3 ff.

[5] Sing Ging Su, *The Chinese Family System.* Columbia University Dissertation. New York, 1922. p. 38-39; 84-87.

[6] *Shu Ching* and *Shih Ching* passim. See: *Couvreur,* S., S.J., *Chou King.* Hochienfu. 1897. p. 101-113.

[7] Fitzgerald, *Loc. Cit.* p. 261-270.

[8] Forke, Alfred, *Geschichte der Neueren Chinesischen Philosphie.* Hamburg, 1938. p. 179.

[9] Shryock, John K., *The Origin and Development of the State cult of Confucius.* New York–London, 1932. p. 93 ff.

natural mysticism, and during the Han dynasty became a cult with many gods, practice of alchemy and gross superstition. In the course of time it became highly elaborate through wholesale imitation of Buddhist practices. [10]

C. Buddhism

During the Han dynasty Buddhist missionaries from India and Central Asia began to propagate Buddhism in China, mainly in the form of Mahayana Buddhism. [11] Its elaborate liturgy, its stimulating philosophy and its rich pantheon had a profound effect on the Chinese mind. Buddhism became very strong during the T'ang period (618-906) and modified Chinese civilization in many ways. Yet in its liberal adaptation to Chinese life, it lost many of its original tenets, and was during the last centuries in a state of decay. Today there are signs of a Buddhist revival in China due to the general freedom of religion and the necessity of competition with Christianity. [12]

D. Tendency to Syncretism

Seldom does a Chinese adhere to one religion only. He selects from all religions what suits him best. Besides being a worshipper of innumerable spirits, he can be at the same time a good Confucian, a client of Buddha and Kuan-yin, and a follower of Taoist deities. This attitude is well expressed in the famous Chinese proverb: The three religions are one. [13]

In this discordant world of religious views Christianity entered during the seventh century, and then only in a heretical form.

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[10] Waley, Arthur, *The Way and its Power.* A Study of the Tao-Te-Ching and its place in Chinese Thought. London, 1934. Introduction. See also Wieger, Leo, S.J. *A History of the Religious Beliefs and Philosophical Opinions in China.* Translated by E. C. Werner. Hsien-hsien, 1927. Consult the Index under Taoism.

[11] Hodous, Lewis, "The Introduction of Buddhism into China." In *McDonald Presentation Volume, Princeton,* 1933.

[12] J. B. Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism.* New York, 1928. p. 379-392.

[13] Dorée, *Researches into Chinese Superstitions,* p. V.

II. Nestorian Christianity in China

Christianity was first [14] brought to China as Nestorianism by a Syrian monk called Alopen (635 A.D.). What we know of this sect in China is mostly from the inscription of the famous Nestorian monument discovered in Sianfu about 1625 A.D. [15] During the T'ang dynasty Nestorians had many monasteries in China, and translated Christian books into Chinese. Yet due to the monastic and predominantly foreign character of this religion, Nestorianism never struck deep roots in Chinese soil. [16] As a foreign religion it was persecuted together with Buddhism, decayed rapidly and was extinct by 1000 A. D. Re-introduced by the Mongols who conquered China during most of the thirteenth century, it was then a powerful religion in many countries of Asia. Finally, in the early years of the Ming dynasty, a time of national restoration, Nestorianism being a Mongol-protected religion and supported by foreigners, was again persecuted and disappeared for good. [17]

III. Catholic Missions in Medieval Times[18]

The Mongol invasion of the 13th century had frightened Europe and directed the Church's attention to the peoples in the dark and legendary Far East. To prevent new attacks, the Popes sent envoys to the Mongol Khans to persuade them to refrain from the destruction of Europe and accept Christianity, [19]—hence the embassies of John of Plano Carpini, O.F.M., Andrew of Lonju-

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[14] For possible earlier attempts see Elia, Paschal d', S.J., *The Catholic Missions in China. Shanghai,* 1934. p. 1-6.

[15] Saeki, P.Y., *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China.* Tokyo, 1937. p. 11-124.

[16] Moule, A.C., "The primitive Failure of Christianity in China." *The International Review of Missions.* 1931. p.456-459.

[17] Moule, A.C., *Christians in China before the Year 1550.* New York, 1920. p. 27-165.

[18] This period of Medieval Catholic Missions in China cannot be treated in this connection as fully as it deserves. A more detailed study will follow later.

[19] Wyngaert, Anastasius, O.F.M. *Sinica Franciscana.* Vol. I.; Altaner, B., O.P., *Die Dominikanermissionen des 13. Jahrhunderts.* p. 128.

meau, O.P., William of Rubruck, O.F.M., and others. [20] These intrepid men had little success at the Mongol courts, but were able to make a few converts. The man who became the founder of the missions in China is the great Franciscan John of Montecorvino (1246-1328) [21]. Arriving in China in 1294 with a letter to Kublai Khan, he gained the favor of Kublai's successor, Timur Khan, built the first Catholic Church in Peking (1299), and, by 1305, had baptized about 6000 persons. [22] Other Franciscans, some of them bishops, arrived to consecrate John Archbishop of Peking and assist him in the founding of missions. There were churches in important cities like Peking, Ch'üanchow (Zaitun), Nanking, [23] Hangchow, and Yangchow. When John of Montecorvino died, it is estimated there were a hundred thousand Christians in the empire. [24] But, when the Mongol power declined and Chinese nationalism rose high, difficult times began for the foreign religion. Many missionaries who set out for Cathay were never again heard of. The last missionaries who lived to bring back news of the mission were those of the legation of John of Marignolli, O.F.M. (1353). Fifteen years later, the Chinese drove out the hated Mongol. Gradually the Christian communities disappeared leaving only a few traces of their existence. [25]

IV. Modern Missions in China

(The Period of Hopeful Beginning and Growth)
(1552-1707)

A. Unsuccessful Attempts

Two centuries later Europe had entered upon a new age. It had discovered new continents and had made rapid progress in many fields of culture. Spanish and Portuguese merchants crossed

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[20] Wyngaert, Anastasius Van den, O.F.M. *Sinica Franciscana.* Vol. I, passim.

[21] Wyngaert, Anastasius Van den, O.F.M. *Jean de Mont Corvin, O.F.M., Premier Évêque de Khanbaliq.* Lille, 1924.—Habig, Marion, O.F.M., "Friar John of Montecorvino, the Apostle of the Far East." *The New Review.* Calcutta. May 1935.

[22] Letter of John of Montecorvino. Wyngaert, *Sinica Franciscana,* I, 347.

[23] Anonymus, "Oldest Known Church Building in China." *Chinese Recorder.* 66 (1935) 654-656; 762.

[24] Rowbotham A.H., *Missionary and Mandarin. Berkeley,* 1942. p. 33.

[25] Of the large literature on this phase we mention only three works: Wyngaert, Anastasius Van den, O.F.M., *Sinica Franciscana,* the standard edition of all the Franciscan sources; Lemmens, Leonard, O.F.M., *Die Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen.* Münster, 1929. Moule, A.D. *Christians in China before the year 1550.* New York. 1920. p. 166-264.

the high seas, and missionaries, in a fresh outburst of religious zeal, had brought the Gospel to many hitherto unknown countries. Before long the Church was again knocking at the door of China. But China, considering herself the only civilized nation in the world, and tired of Japanese pirates and Portuguese traders, had decided to keep herself apart from the outside "barbarian" world. St. Francis Xavier, S.J., was the first who planned entering China. He died, however, on San-ch'uan Island (near Canton) before fulfilling his wish (1552). ([26]) After him Augustinians, Dominicans, Jesuits, and Franciscans made repeated efforts to stay there, but all were expelled. ([27])

B. Matteo Ricci the Pioneer

The credit for blazing the trail for the modern missions in China is due to the three Jesuits Alessandro Valignano, Michele Ruggieri, and especially the great Matteo Ricci. ([28]) They followed a well planned method. They realized that, if they were to succeed, they must come to China with a great appreciation of its culture, explain the Christian truths in terms significant to the Chinese and show them that the Faith is in fullest harmony with the best of their own traditions. Therefore, they devoted much time to the study of the language and the customs of the country. They lived, dressed and behaved like the Chinese ([29]) and appeared in China as members of the leading class, as scholars. They were sure that, if the upper classes could be won to the Faith, all China would soon follow. Therefore, they sought the friendship of the officials, attracted their interest with fine books, Western paintings, optical instruments, and the like. Since they found that Chinese scholars were greatly interested in art and literature, Ricci soon laid the foundations for a native Catholic art ([30]) and literature. In philosophical discussions he revealed in later years a profound

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[26] Bernard, Henry, S.J., *Aux Portes de Chine.* Les Missionaires due Seizième Siècle, 1514-1588. Tientsin, 1933. p. 34-51.

[27] Bernard, *Loc. Cit.* p. 103-135. See also Wyngaert, Anastasius, O.F.M., *Sinica Franciscana.* Vol. II, passim.

[28] Ricci, Matteo, S.J., *Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci.* Edited by Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, S.J., Macerata, 1911. Also: Bernard, Henry, S.J., Le Père Matthieu Ricci et la société chinoise de son temps (1552-1610). 2 Volumes. Tientsin, 1937.

[29] Letter to the General of the Society of Jesus. In *Opere Storiche,* Vol. II. p. 246.

[30] Elia, Pasquale D', S.J., *Le Origine dell'Arte Cristiana Cinese.* (1583-1640). Roma, 1939, p. 18 ff.

knowledge of the Confucian books which he used to interpret Christian dogmas. His best-known work, the *Genuine Meaning of the Heavenly Lord,* is an elegant explanation of Christianity written in this way, and was to become a classic in Chinese literature. ([31])

Ricci and his companions succeeded slowly, yet under many difficulties, in having a little mission in Chao-ch'ing, South China, in 1583. Later he proceeded to Middle China (1599) and only after 18 years of work was he able to settle definitely in Peking (1601). ([32]) When he died there in 1610, he had made not more than 2500 converts, but among them were such brilliant scholars as Hsü Kuang-chi, Imperial Minister of State, and Li Chih-tsao, a high official of the Board of Public Works, who did the greatest services for the infant Church. ([33]) At Ricci's death the basis for fruitful missionary work was laid.

C. Ricci's Method Disputed

At that time some of Ricci's confreres both in China and Japan began to criticize him on several points. They claimed that he had permitted to converts things which could not be permitted, e.g., the use of certain names for God and the participation in the worship of Confucius and the ancestors. After the study of the ancient Chinese books Ricci had allowed these rites, first, because he thought he could strip them of their religious significance since they had been originally merely civil acts; secondly, because the prohibition of the rites would close the door to many pagans, especially of the higher classes. The other missionaries thought that the participation in them was incompatible with the practice of Christianity. Though there was a difference of opinion on these points, all missionaries were convinced of the necessity of permis-

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[31] Ricci, Matteo, S.J., *Opere Storiche.* Vol. II. p. 271. Cf. Elia, Paschal, S.J., *Catholic Missions in China.* p. 38.

[32] Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *A History of Christian Missions in China.* New York, 1929. p. 96-98.

[33] Rowbotham, Arnold, H., *Missionary and Mandarin.* p. 66.—It is interesting to note that Madame Chiang Kai-shek is descended, through her mother, the late Mme. Soong I-shih, from the great Hsü Kuang-ch'i. Mme. Soong I-shih's maternal grandfather, Hsü Fu-yün, was the sixteenth lineal descendant of Hsü Kuang-ch'i. Sometime during the eighteenth century there developed two main branches of the Hsü family. The Catholic branch lived quietly at Zi-Ka-Wei. The Soong Sisters of whom Mme. Chiang is one, came from the other branch.

sible adaptation, and, in practice, the majority of the missionaries followed Ricci's method. (34)

D. Jesuit Missions after Ricci

For the next two decades (1610-1633) a handful of Jesuits were the only missionaries in China. But these enjoyed a great reputation as scientists, and were protected by friendly officials. Through petitions of Catholic officials, they were even invited to serve as directors of the Imperial Observatory which enhanced considerably the prestige of the new religion. Thus the missionaries were able to found Christian communities in many parts of the empire. Even mandarins themselves propagated the Faith in their own district. As director of the Observatory, the Jesuit Johann Adam Schall (1592-1666) became the friend and counselor of the young Manchu emperor Shun-chih, and a very influential figure in the empire. (35) At times Father Schall was the real power behind the throne, and the missionaries "needed only to say that they were brothers or companions of Schall" and their difficulties ceased at once. (36) The Jesuits were also with the unfortunate imperial Ming family which had been driven out of Peking by the Manchus, and were able to baptize the Empress and more than a hundred members of the imperial family. (37)

E. Dominican and Franciscan Missions

By 1631, the Dominican Angelo Cocchi had settled in Fukien coming from the Philippines by way of Formosa. Two years later Juan Bautista Morales, an experienced missionary among the Chinese in the Philippines, continued his work. (38) With Morales had come the Franciscan Antonio Caballero (de Santa Maria) (1633) who worked first with the Dominicans in Fukien, but later began a mission in Shantung which has had a long and glorious

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34 Pieper, Karl, "Neue Aufschlüsse über die ersten Anfänge des chinesischen Ritenstreites." *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft.* 1924. p. 1-11.

35 A splendid source for the life of Fr. Schall is: Väth, Alfons, S.J., *Johann Adam Schall von Bell, S.J.*, Missionar in China. kaiserlicher Astronom und Ratgeber am Hof von Peking. 1592-1666. Köln, 1933.

36 Väth, *Loc. Cit.* p. 220.

37 Elia, *Catholic Missions in China.* p. 46-47.

38 Bierman, Benno, O.P., *Die Anfänge der neueren Dominikanermission in China.* Vechta, 1927.

history. ([39]) Unfortunately, with the arrival of Dominicans and Franciscans the discussion of the Chinese rites came to a climax. The new missionaries, though willing to co-operate with their Jesuit confreres who for nearly fifty years had borne the burden of the missions, were confused at the sight of Christians participating in what they felt to be pagan rites. Unable to come to bring themselves to the point of view of the Jesuits in China, they referred the question to their superiors in the Philippines and to Rome, asking for instructions. In the meantime they founded missions, not permitting the converts to participate in the ceremonies in honor of Confucius and their ancestors. The Holy See successively approved both methods in two decrees (1645-1656), and these decrees were to be observed "according to the questions, circumstances, and everything set forth in them" (Decree of 1669). ([40]) Missionary work progressed in comparative peace except for a severe persecution in 1664.

F. New Mission Organization

Since 1455 all Far Eastern missions had been under the spiritual care of Portugal. The Chinese missions belonged to the diocese of Macao. But, by 1650, China needed a hierarchy of its own. In 1651 the newly created Congregation of the Propaganda contemplated for China a patriarchate with two or three archbishops and twelve bishops, all nominated by the Portuguese Crown. ([41]) But Portugal was increasingly unable to meet the needs of the missions. Therefore, in 1658, the Propaganda erected three Apostolic Vicariates which were directly under the Propaganda and the Pope. ([42]) Msgr. Pallu, Msgr. de la Motte Lambert and Msgr. Cotolendi, founders of the famous Society of the Paris Foreign Missions, ([43]) were the First Vicars Apostolic and the first French missionaries to enter China. Portugal, insisting on her rights, soon forced the Pope to limit the jurisdiction of the Vicars Apostolic and erect

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[39] Maas, Otto, O.F.M., *Die Wiedereröffnung der Franziskanermissionen in der Neuzeit. Münster, Westf.*, 1926. p. 143 ff.

[40] Brucker, Joseph, S.J., "Ricci." *Cath. Encyclopedia.* 1913. Vol. 13. p. 38.

[41] Cordier, Henry, "China." *Ibidem.* Vol. 3. p. 675.

[42] Jann, Adelhelm, O.F.M. Cap., *Die Katholischen Missionen in Indien, China und Japan.* p. 214-215.

[43] Launay, Adrien, *Histoire générale de la Société des Missions Etrangères.* 3 Volumes. Paris, 1894.—Baudiment, L., *François Pallu, Principal Foundateur de la Société des Missions Etrangères.* (1626-1684) Paris, 1934.

two new dioceses, Nanking and Peking, (1690), which existed as such until 1856. Six years later the Propaganda limited these vast dioceses to two Chinese provinces each, and made nine Vicariates of the remainder. ([44])

G. The Edict of Toleration

In 1669 the young emperor K'ang-hsi took over the government, and one of his first acts was to recall the missionaries who had been sent into exile by the regents during the persecution of 1664. The emperor employed the Jesuits at court as astronomers and interpreters, and recognizing their ability and sincerity, he gradually became their true friend. Especially was the noted Jesuit-astronomer Ferdinand Verbiest his esteemed teacher and friend. ([45]) Verbiest asked Louis XIV of France to send some Jesuit scholars to China to perpetuate his work at the court, and in 1688 the first five of a long line of distinguished French scholars arrived in Peking to work for the promotion of the Catholic religion and the advancement of science.

In 1692 a persecution began in Hangchow, and the magistrate forbade Chinese to enter Christian Churches. For more than half a century the Jesuits had performed great services for the emperors. They had aided the government in overcoming its enemies ([46]) and concluded a favorable treaty with Russia (Nertchinsk, Sept. 7, 1688). In recognition of these services, and because "the Occidentals in the provinces have never caused any disorder" and "their doctrines are not capable of leading the people astray", K'ang-hsi gave the positive assurance that everyone was permitted to enter Christian churches "to worship God without fear of molestation" (Edict of Toleration, March 22, 1692). ([47]) This edict did not eliminate the strong opposition of hostile official circles, but it gave the Church freedom and peace as long as the emperor was the friend of the foreign priests. Yet should Christianity ever prove harmful to existing Chinese institutions, the government would be ready to suppress it.

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[44] Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*. p. 125.

[45] Bosmans, H. S.J., "Ferdinand Verbiest" *Revue des questions scientifiques*. 21 (1912) p. 195-273; 375-464.

[46] Schall and Verbiest had been ordered to found cannons for the Chinese. Cf., *e.g.*, Väth, *Joh. Adam Schall von Bell*. p. 111-115.

[47] Gobien Charles Le, S.J., *Histoire de l'édit de l'empereur de la Chine*. Paris, 1698.

H. The Growth of the Church

Since the death of Ricci (1610), the Church had spread rapidly over most of China. After 1692 it grew even faster. The favorable prospects drew more missionaries to China than ever before. In the years 1697-98 alone, 25 Franciscans entered Canton. ([48]) The 13,000 converts of 1627 had increased to 150,000 in 1650, and were at the turn of the century not far from 300,000. ([49]) Between 1692 and 1707 there were missionaries and Christians in all provinces except in the far North-west. By 1700 the Jesuits were working in ten provinces, and had in Kiangsi more than 100 churches. Franciscans of the Spanish and Italian missions worked in nine provinces. Dominicans concentrated in the provinces of Fukien, Kwangtung, and Chekiang with good success. Augustinians, too, had entered China by 1680, and in 1721 had 17 members in China.

The missionaries were assisted in their work by catechists, men and women, as is the method today. The need of a native priesthood was felt very early. The Jesuits wanted native scholars as priests and thought of replacing Latin by Classical Chinese in liturgical functions. But it never became a reality. The first native Chinese priest was Lo Wen-tsao, a Dominican who in 1685 became also the first native bishop in China. ([50]) In this early period a surprisingly great number of Chinese Catholic books were published. ([51]) By 1675 even the missal, the breviary, the Ritual and the Summa theologica (30 Vols.) had been put into Chinese. ([52]) Of a population of 140 million Chinese in 1710 ([53]) the number of Christians was still very small, but under Imperial protection the Church was a noticeable group in the empire.

I. Handicaps of the Missions

Beside the splendid progress of the mission work we must not forget the great handicaps under which the work was done. The

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[48] Gubbels, Noël, O.F.M., *Trois Siècles d'Apostolat.* Histoire du Catholicisme au Hu-kwang depuis les origines 1587 jusqu'à 1870. Paris, 1934. p. 46.—Latourette, *History of Christian Missions in China.* p. 117-121.

[49] Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin.* p. 208-210.

[50] Huonder, Anton, S.J., *Der Einheimische Klerus in den Heidenländern.* Freiburg, Br., 1899. p. 157.

[51] Cf., e.g., Wylie, Alexander, *Notes on Chinese Literature.* Shanghai, 1922. p. 172-181.

[52] Huonder, *Loc. Cit.* p. 160.

[53] Latourette, K.S., *The Chinese Their History and Culture.* Vol. II. p. 8.

difficulty of the language, the different customs, the long distance from Europe, the financial difficulties, especially of the missionaries of the Propaganda, the dependence on the whims of pagan officials, the lethargy of the people in religious matters, the opposition of the pagan religions—these and many more slowed down the progress of the missions. Things which disturbed the peace of the missions were an emphasized nationalism and petty jealousies and rivalries among the missionary bodies. The greatest handicaps, however, were certain Chinese institutions such as the worship of Confucius and the ancestors, which were "the very heart of the religious and social observance of the nation" ([54]) and yet against the spirit of Christ. The mastery of this difficulty was an immense problem which had to be solved. Upon the way it was solved the fate of Christianity would depend. No wonder that it was a matter of controversy for so many years and created so much excitement, even bitterness among the missionaries.

J. The Controversy of Rites

The beginnings of this controversy have already been told. Discussions continued during the whole seventeenth century, but towards the end of this century the situation became very complicated. Only the main events can be mentioned here. ([55])

The lack of an unified practice caused much confusion in the mission field. In order to stop this confusion in his vicariate, Msgr. Charles Maigrot, M.E., Vicar Apostolic of Fukien, condemned and prohibited the rites vigorously. A few years later (1697) the Holy Office began to re-examine the question on the basis of new documents furnished by the representatives of both viewpoints. In 1700, the emperor K'ang-hsi declared the rites to be not religious. Yet, in 1704, Pope Clement XI, after the most careful investigation, condemned these and similar practices. From then on the situation became very delicate. Rome sent a legate, Charles Mail-

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[54] Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin*. p. 130.

[55] We recommend for further reading the detailed account in Huc, Evariste-Régis, C.M., *Christianity in China, Tartary, and Tibet*. London. 1858. Vol. III. especially Chapter VI. pp. 239-284. Another study often referred to is Brucker, Joseph, S.J., "Chinois" (Rites). *Dictionaire de Théologie Catholique*. Vol. II. Col. 2364-2391, which is somewhat apologetic. For the political implications of the Rites Controversy see Jann, Adelhelm, O.F.M. Cap. *Die Katholischen Missionen in Indien, China und Japan*. esp. pp. 422-511.

lard de Tournon, to deal directly with the emperor and bring about a peaceful settling of the question. Yet K'ang-hsi could not be persuaded to accept the Pope's viewpoint. Following instructions, the legate prohibited the rites, and the legation became a failure. The decree of 1715 made clear that Rome would not alter the decision. Another legation, under Charles Ambrose Mezzabarba, also proved unsuccessful. Finally, in 1742, when times had already changed, the Bull *Ex quo singulari* put an end to the Rites controversy by obliging all missionaries to accept the stricter method. It was a hard decision. The Church, harassed from many sides in an faithless age, was willing to suffer persecution rather than endanger the Faith by doubtful practices. ([56])

V. *The Period of Persecution (1707 - 1844)*

A. The Later Years of the Reign of K'ang-hsi

The emperor K'ang-hsi, angry at the Papal legate de Tournon and the Holy See on account of their attitude to the Chinese Rites, decreed in 1706 that only those missionaries who favored the Chinese Rites could remain in China. For this reason they had to apply for an imperial patent which was to be given only after a personal examination. ([57]) Many missionaries refused to apply for the patent, but only a few were banished from China. The situation was, however, more precarious than before 1707, and enemies soon opened their attacks on Christianity. The Bull *Ex illa die* of 1715 increased the tension. ([58]) Two years later a law was passed forbidding Chinese to embrace the Faith and obliging all missionaries without imperial patent to leave the country. ([59])

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[56] Recently an instruction of the Propaganda has made certain concessions in the observance of these rites. Cf. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis.* 32 (Jan. 1940) p. 24-26 for the original text and *Tablet*, London. (Jan. 20, 1940) p. 59 for an English translation. It is, however, to be noted that these concessions have been made because the rites "though in earlier times connected with rites of religious nature, have at the present time, owing to changes in customs and ideas in the course of centuries, no more than mere civil significance of filial respect for ancestors, of patriotic sentiment or of social amenity."

[57] Thomas, A., *Histoire de la Mission de Pékin.* Paris, 1923. p. 196.

[58] Cf. *Lettres Edifiantes*, Paris, 1843. Vol. III. p. 270-286.

[59] For this and the following see: Le Roux, M.E., "La situation légale du christianisme en Chine avant les Traités." *Revue d'Histoire des Missions.* 10 (1933) p. 125 ff.

Yet until the death of K'ang-hsi (1722) who always remained a friend of the Jesuit scholars in Peking, the laws were not generally enforced and the Church carried on in comparative freedom.

B. Emperor Yung-cheng closes the Churches

Conditions changed rapidly when the new emperor Yung-cheng (1722-1735) signed an edict (Jan. 10, 1724) commanding that missionaries skilled in astronomy be sent to Peking, that all others be sent to Macao, that all churches (except those in Peking) be confiscated and all Christians renounce their faith. ([60]) From now on the ambassadors of Christ were unlawful strangers in China, and the administration of the sacraments had to be done in private houses and at secret gatherings. This was, however, even more dangerous since Christians were repeatedly confused with the subversive (Buddhist) White Lotos Sect and similar secret societies which were for centuries the dread of the government. ([61])

C. Hard Times under Ch'ien-lung

The emperor Ch'ien-lung (1736-1795) enforced the edict of his predecessor even more strictly, and his edict of 1736 prohibited Christianity, particularly to Manchus who were the holders of all higher posts in the empire. ([62]) A severe persecution broke out shortly after the promulgation of the final condemnation of the rites (1742). In 1746-1748 the Dominican-bishop Peter Sanz and four of his missionaries were killed in Fukien. ([63]) At the same time, two Jesuits were martyred in Soochow. ([64]) Another violent persecution occurred in 1784-85 when two Franciscan-bishops and six priests, two of them Chinese, died in the horrible prisons of Peking while 12 others were released after months of suffering. ([65]) Yet, the worst persecution was reserved for the next century.

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[60] Cordier, Henry, "Documents pour servir a l'histoire ecclésiastique de l'Extrême Orient." *Revue de l'Extrême Orient.* II. p. 54-55.

[61] Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin.* p. 201, 206-207.

[62] Mailla, Joseph-Hune-Marie de Moyriac de, S.J., *Histoire Générale de la Chine.* 12 Volumes. Paris, 1777-1783. XI. p. 515.

[63] *Relazione del Martirio de Padri F. Pietro Martire Sanz Vescovo Mauricastrense* etc. Roma, 1752.

[64] Rochemonteix, C. de, S.J., *Joseph Amiot et les derniers survivants de la mission Francaise a Pékin.* Paris, 1915. p. 25.

[65] "Histoire Abregée de la persecution contre la religion Chrétienne en 1784-85." *Nouvelles des Missions Orientales.* Seminaire des Missions Étrangères. 1786. Vol. II. p. 4-80.

D. Conditions in the Provinces

The Christians in the provinces felt the persecution most. They were considered adherents of a wicked sect, and were always in danger of being dragged before tribunals to be deprived of their property and tortured. Thousands went into slavery to Ily (Turkestan). Many Christians apostatized under the pressure of the Law and public opinion. But many—it is said that there were 150,000-200,000 Christians in China all the time—remained faithful and willing to make the most heroic sacrifices. Letters from the missions have narrated the great faith of these Christians. ([66])

Missionaries gave wonderful example of devotion to their flocks. They lived among the faithful Christians, hidden from the public, to help the Christians to keep their faith. Those who were discovered were imprisoned and faced death. In most cases they were banished from China, but returned on a different road to their Christians. ([67]) In many parts the missionaries won new converts, especially in West China where the priests of the Foreign Missions of Paris under Msgr. Pottier (1726-92) established the Church. ([68])

E. The Church of Peking

Missionaries of various Orders were still in the service of the emperor, but had become skilled workers instead of powerful advisors. They used their influence to intercede for their persecuted brethren in the provinces as much as they could. Due to their services at Court their religious work suffered only few restrictions. Four churches, three of the Jesuits and one of the Propaganda missionaries, were still open and were frequented by thousands of Christians. In 1741 more than a thousand converts were made in Peking some being members of the Court. ([69]) The missionaries of Peking cared also for the Christians in neighboring localities as well as the Christians in Mongolia and Manchuria. The terri-

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[66] See, e.g., the *Lettres Ëdifiantes,* Merigot Edition, 1780-1783. Vol. 23, p. 207; also *Nouvelles des Missions Orientales.* Vol. I. p. 217 ff.

[67] In 1785, when twelve missionaries were released from the prisons of Peking, many desired to be deported to the Philippines, because, from there, they could more easily return to China.

[68] Guiot, Leonide, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII. Siècle.* Vie et apostolat de Mgr. Pottier, son foundateur. Paris, 1892.

[69] Gaubil, Letter of Oct. 29, 1741. *Lettres Ëdifiantes.* 1843. Vol. III. p. 766 ff.

tory north of the Great Wall was dependent upon the Diocese of Peking since 1690, was visited chiefly by native Jesuits, and counted in 1738 about 35,000 Christians. (70) The dissolution of the Society of Jesus was a great misfortune not only for Peking, but also for the missions in the provinces. Only gradually were the Jesuits replaced by the Lazarists who have been in charge of the mission of Peking since 1785. (71)

F. The Native Clergy

The missionaries had at an early date begun to raise Chinese to the priesthood, but it was particularly in these trying times that the Church realized that the formation of a native clergy was "the only way of keeping up the missions of China". (72) Important Seminaries were established in Macao, Siam, and especially in Naples, where a secular priest, Matteo Ripa, had founded the Institute of the Holy Family. This College had from 1732 to 1888 educated 106 Chinese priests. (73) The native priests were men of great devotion to the Church, and the most efficient helpers of the foreign missionaries. Andreas Ly, for instance, was from 1746 to 1752 the only priest in all Szechwan province. Alone and in the face of grave persecution he ministered faithfully to the scattered Christians, and has left us a valuable diary of his activities. (74) When in 1803 in Szechwan the first Catholic Synod was held, thirteen out of fourteen priests who assembled were Chinese. (75)

G. The first decades of the Nineteenth Century

In the first decades of the Nineteenth century mission work in China became so difficult that it seemed that eventually there would be no more Christians. Few priests and less funds arrived

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70 Fra. Attiret, S.J., Letter of Nov. 1, 1743. *Lettres Edifiantes.* Paris, 1843. Vol. III. p. 786-795.

71 Cordier, Henry, "La suppression de la Compagnie de Jésus 9 (1773) et la Mission de Pékin." *T'oung Pao,* 1916. p. 271-347; 561 ff. For the Lazarists in China see: Brandt, J. van den, C.M., *Les Lazaristes en Chine.* 1697-1935. Peiping, 1936. It is to be noted that the Vincentian Fathers were in China as early as 1697.

72 Words of Pope Clement XII. on May 18, 1734 to the first Catholic native priests from the College of Naples. Elia, Paschal, S.J. *Native Episcopacy in China.* 1300-1926. Shanghai, 1927. p. 42.

73 Gubbels, *Trois Siècles d'Apostolat,* p. 199.

74 Launay, Adrian, *Journal d'André Ly, Prêtre Chinois.* Latin text. Hongkong, 1924.

75 Elia, Paschal de, S.J., *Native Episcopacy in China.* p. 471.

because the French Revolution and the German "Aufklärung"* had weakened the forces at home. China, weakened by internal upheavals, sought to stamp out the last traces of the foreign religion. In 1811, an edict was issued stricter than any before. ([76]) Missionaries when found were now ruthlessly put to death and at this time Msgr. Dufresse, M.E., John of Triora, O.F.M., the Lazarist Francis-Regis Clet and several native priests won the palm of martyrdom. ([77]) Even the mission of Peking was being ruined. In 1811, all but seven European priests were driven out. ([78]) In the course of a few years the beautiful churches of Peking were razed to the ground. The hour of darkness had again arrived for Christ's Church in China.

Yet, in these desperate years suddenly the first ray of a new dawn appeared on the horizon. Western powers were pressing hard on China to open up her ports for unrestricted trade. After the Opium War (1838-42) England gained the first concessions (Treaty of 1842). Two years later, the French concluded a treaty with China (1844), and, assuming the role of a protector of Catholic Missions in China, brought about the issue of an imperial edict which revoked the law of Yung-cheng (1724) and allowed Chinese again to embrace the Faith. From that time on, the Church in China recovered slowly, but constantly, and then entered upon a period of expansion which surpassed all others in the history of China.

* (Era of Enlightenment)

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[76] Latourette, *History of Christian Missions in China.* p. 177.

[77] Among the native priests who were martyred were Joseph Yüan and Paul Lin. Cf. Launay, *Histoire Générale de la Société des Missions-Etrangères.* Vol. II. p. 490.

[78] *Nouvelles Lettres Edifiantes.* Paris, 1818-1823. Vol. IV. p. 551 f.

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A Study Outline

THE MISSIONS IN CHINA

1. *Briefly mention the notions of Animism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism among the people of China.*

2. *Christianity first came to China as Nestorianism. Why wasn't it popular?*

3. *The man who became the founder of the Catholic missions in China was the great Franciscan, John of Montecorvino. In what century did he live?*

4. *Modern missions in China were established by the Jesuits. Mention their methods of winning converts to the Faith.*

5. *A native clergy was essential for the spread of the Faith in China. What means were used by western missionaries to foster vocations for the religious life among the orientals?*

6. *What benefit to Catholicism was the "Edict of Toleration" enacted on March 22, 1692? Why was the government ready to suppress Christianity?*

7. *Summarize the handicaps peculiar to the missionaries in China.*

8. *Briefly review the Period of Persecution (1707-1844).*

9. *After the Opium War (1838-42) and the pressure of western powers, how were the missionaries in China helped in their work by France and England?*

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(Signed) L. CARDINAL MAGLIONE

Cardinal Secretary of State of His Holiness
(from the Vatican, 23 Nov. 1939)

Translated from "Annuario Missionario Italiano" 1940.

POPE PIUS XII advocates membership in
THE MISSIONARY UNION OF THE CLERGY.